

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A computer-implemented system for providing grouping of annotated electronic documents having mark-ups to be applied to the documents, said system comprising:
  - (A) an annotation component to determine, responsive to at least one user, at least one annotation to be applied to at least one document, including a selection resource to select at least a portion of the at least one document and to associate the at least one annotation therewith, and a mark-up resource to at least one of add and edit the at least one annotation; and
  - (B) a reference component, responsive to the at least one user, to at least one of establish, traverse, indicate, and remove, at least one reference between the at least one portion and at least one of an other portion of the at least one document, an other document, and at least one other portion of the other document.
2. The system of claim 1, further comprising:
  - a view component to select the at least one portion, and to edit, responsive to the at least one user, the at least one portion.
3. The system of claim 1, further comprising:
  - at least one merge component, to associate document data representative of the at least one document and annotation data representative of the at least one annotation to be applied to said at least one document; and to provide a marked-up representation of the at least one document, the marked-up representation having the document data and the annotation data.
4. The system of claim 3, wherein said document data includes at least one element corresponding to a location of the at least one annotation within said document.

5. The system of claim 3, wherein the merge component is responsive to at least one of: the marked-up representation, the document data and the annotation data.
6. The system of claim 3, wherein at least one of the marked-up representation, the document data and the annotation data is at least one of: XML format, binary format, image data, and audio data.
7. The system of claim 3, further comprising:  
at least one split component, responsive to said marked-up representation, to extract the annotation data and the document data from the marked-up representation.
8. The system of claim 1, wherein the at least one annotation indicates an evaluation of at least one legal property relative to the at least one document.
9. The system of claim 1, further comprising:  
at least one version component, to at least one of manage a history of changes and maintain at least one separate version for the at least one document and the at least one annotation applied thereto.
10. The system of claim 1, further comprising:  
at least one schema to identify at least one tag in at least one of the at least one portion, the at least one document, and the at least one annotation.
11. The system of claim 1, further comprising at least one storage medium, wherein at least two of the at least one annotation, the at least one document and the at least one reference are at least one of stored logically separate in the at least one storage medium and stored physically separate in two storage mediums including the at least one storage medium.

12. The system of claim 1, wherein the at least one annotation and the at least one reference are embedded in the at least one document.
13. The system of claim 1, the at least one annotation being associated with the at least one user, the at least one document being accessible by the plurality of users including the at least one user, and wherein access to the at least one annotation applied to the at least one document is limited to the at least one user associated with the at least one annotation.
14. The system of claim 1, wherein the at least one annotation includes at least one of: a pre-defined notation, a user-provided text, a user-defined attribute, a reference to a URL, and a reference to an other file.
15. The system of claim 1, wherein the at least one document is representative of at least one of: a patent document, a trademark document, a copyright document, a product description document, a license document, a sui generis protection document, a design registration document, a trade secret document, and an opinion document.
16. The system of claim 1, further comprising at least one of:
- (C) a report component, responsive to a user, to provide a report having a summary of a plurality of portions in the at least one document and the at least one annotation;
  - (D) a map component, responsive to the user, having a summary of the at least one document, the at least one annotation, and the at least one reference; and
  - (E) at least one display component, having a display of at least one of (i) the at least one document and the at least one annotation, and (ii) the other document.

17. The system of claim 1, wherein the at least one document is an intellectual property document, and the grouping is provided in an intellectual property environment.

18. A computer-implemented system for providing a grouping of annotated electronic documents in an intellectual property environment, said system comprising:

(A) at least one merge component, to associate document data representative of at least one document and annotation data representative of at least one annotation to be applied to the at least one document, said document data including at least one element corresponding to a location of the at least one annotation within said document; and to provide at least one marked-up representation of the at least one document, the at least one marked-up representation having the document data and the annotation data;

(B) at least one split component, responsive to said at least one marked-up representation, to extract the annotation data and the document data from the at least one marked-up representation; and

(C) at least one version component, to at least one of manage a history of changes and to maintain a separate version for the document data and the annotation data applied thereto.

19. The system of claim 18, wherein the merge component and the split component are responsive to at least one of the at least one marked-up representation, the document data, and the annotation data.

20. The system of claim 18, wherein at least one of the at least one marked-up representation, the document data and the annotation data is at least one of: XML format, binary format, image data, and audio data.

21. The system of claim 18, further comprising a schema to identify at least one tag in the at least one element, and logic to determine tags for at least one of the document data, the annotation data, and the at least one marked-up representation.
22. The system of claim 18, wherein the annotation data includes at least one of: a pre-defined notation, a user-provided text, a user-defined attribute, and at least one reference to at least one of: an element in the document, an element in an other document, a URL, and an other file.
23. The system of claim 18, wherein the document data is representative of at least one of: a patent document, a trademark document, a copyright document, a product description document, a license document, a sui generis protection document, a design registration document, a trade secret document, and an opinion document.
24. The system of claim 18, further comprising least one of: (D) a report tool, to provide a report having a summary of elements and corresponding annotation data of the at least one marked-up representation; (E) an annotation tool, responsive to a user, to determine annotation data for the at least one marked-up representation, including a selection resource to select at least one element of the document data to be annotated, and a mark-up resource to at least one of add and edit annotation data corresponding to the at least one element; (F) an edit tool, responsive to a user, to select the at least one element, and to edit the at least one element, including a representation of the at least one selected element, and a representation of the at least one annotation data; (G) a reference tool, to determine at least one reference to the at least one element and at least an other element of at least one document, and to enable the at least one reference to be traversed by the user; and (H) a map tool, responsive to the user, to summarize the at least one marked-up

representation, the annotation data, and the at least one reference corresponding to the at least one element.

25. In a computer-implemented system for providing a grouping of annotated electronic documents in an intellectual property environment, a method for annotating intellectual property documents, implemented by a computer system, said method comprising the at least one of sequential, non-sequential and sequence-independent steps of:

(A) determining at least one annotation to be applied to at least one document, including selecting at least a portion of the at least one document to be annotated, associating the at least one annotation with the at least one portion, and editing annotation data corresponding to the at least one portion; and

(B) at least one of establishing, traversing, indicating, and removing at least one reference from the at least one portion to at least one of an other portion of the at least one document, an other document, and at least one other portion of the other document.

26. The method of claim 25, further comprising at least one of: (C) providing a report having a summary of the at least one portion in the at least one document and the at least one annotation associated therewith; and (D) providing a map having a summary of the at least one document, the at least one annotation, and the at least one reference.

27. The method of claim 25, wherein the at least one annotation includes at least one of: a pre-defined notation, a user-provided text, a user-defined attribute, a reference to a URL, and a reference to an other file.

28. The method of claim 25, wherein the at least one document is representative of at least one of: a patent document, a trademark document, a copyright document, a product

description document, a license document, a sui generis protection document, a design registration document, a trade secret document, and an opinion document.

29. A system for retrieving and storing a plurality of electronic documents and a plurality of annotations to be applied to the documents, the plurality of documents to be accessed by a plurality of users, the plurality of annotations to be accessed by at least a portion of the users, the system comprising:

(A) at least one storage portion, to store at least one document and at least one annotation associated therewith;

(B) at least one server to determine respective locations of the plurality of documents including the at least one document, and the plurality of annotations including the at least one annotation; and

(C) at least one manager, to determine a location of the at least one document and at least one annotation to be applied thereto, stored in the at least one storage portion, and to at least one of retrieve from and store in, via the at least one server, the at least one document and the at least one annotation to be applied thereto, in the at least one storage portion; and to provide the at least one document with the at least one annotation applied thereto.

30. The system of claim 29, the at least one annotation being associated with the at least one user, the at least one document being accessible by the plurality of users including the at least one user, and wherein access to the at least one annotation applied to the at least one document is limited to the at least one user associated with the at least one annotation.

31. The system of claim 29, wherein the at least one manager determines, if the at least one document is read-only, to not store a further copy of the at least one document.
32. The system of claim 29, further comprising a version control to maintain at least one separate version of the at least one document and the at least one annotation.
33. The system of claim 29, further comprising at least one analyzer to at least one of manage, traverse, search, view, report and edit, via the at least one manager, the at least one document and the at least one annotation associated therewith.
34. The system of claim 29, wherein the at least one manager associates at least one reference with at least one of the at least one document and the at least one annotation, the at least one reference being to at least one of: an element in the document, an element in an other document, a URL, and a file.
35. The system of claim 29, wherein at least one of the marked-up representation, the document data and the annotation data is at least one of: XML format, binary format, image data, and audio data.
36. The system of claim 29, wherein the at least one annotation indicates an evaluation of at least one legal property relative to the at least one document.
37. The system of claim 29, wherein the at least one annotation includes at least one of: a pre-defined notation, a user-provided text, a user-defined attribute, a reference to a URL, and a reference to an other file.
38. The system of claim 29, wherein the at least one document is representative of at least one of: a patent document, a trademark document, a copyright document, a product description document, a license document, a sui generic protection document, a design registration document, a trade secret document, and an opinion document.



39. In a computer-implemented system, a method for annotating electronic documents in an intellectual property environment, comprising the at least one of sequential, non-sequential, and sequence independent steps of:

- (A) providing at least one document;
- (B) determining at least one section of the at least one document to be annotated;
- (C) determining at least one annotation to be applied to the at least one section;
- (D) associating the at least one annotation with the at least one section; and
- (E) storing the at least one annotation for later retrieval, wherein the annotation is stored separately from the at least one document.

40. The method of claim 39, wherein determining the at least one section includes at least one of (i) indicating, responsive to the user, a scope of the at least one section and selecting the at least one section; (ii) selecting, responsive to the user, the at least one section from a plurality of pre-determined sections; and (iii) automatically or semi-automatically pre-determining a scope of the at least one section, and automatically, manually or semi-automatically selecting the at least one section.

41. The method of claim 39, wherein determining the at least one annotation includes at least one of: (i) selecting at least one pre-defined notation; (ii) receiving input text; (ii) selecting at least one user-defined attribute; (iv) receiving a reference to a URL; and (v) receiving a reference to a file.

42. The method of claim 41, further comprising the step of preliminarily determining a plurality of user-defined attributes including the at least one attribute.

43. The method of claim 39, further comprising storing the at least one document for later retrieval.
44. The method of claim 39, further comprising maintaining at least separate version for at least one of the at least one annotation and the at least one document.
45. The method of claim 39, wherein the at least one annotation is associated with at least one user, the at least one document being accessible by the plurality of users including the at least one user, further comprising limiting access to the at least one annotation to the at least one user associated with the at least one annotation.
46. The method of claim 39, wherein the at least one document is representative of at least one of: a patent document, a trademark document, a copyright document, a product description document, a license document, a sui generic protection document, a design registration document, a trade secret document, and an opinion document.
47. The method of claim 39, wherein the at least one annotation indicates an evaluation of at least one legal property relative to the at least one document.
48. In a computer-implemented system, a method for annotating electronic documents in an intellectual property environment, the annotations indicating an evaluation of at least one legal property relative to at least the annotated electronic document, comprising the at least one of sequential, non-sequential, and sequence independent steps of:
- (A) providing at least one document, wherein the at least one document is representative of at least one of: a patent document, a trademark document, a copyright document, a product description document, a license document, a sui generic protection document, a design registration document, a trade secret document, and an opinion document;

(B) determining at least one section of the at least one document to be annotated, including at least one of (i) indicating, responsive to the user, a scope of the at least one section and selecting the at least one section; (ii) selecting, responsive to the user, the at least one section from a plurality of pre-determined sections; and (iii) automatically or semi-automatically pre-determining a scope of the at least one section, and automatically, manually or semi-automatically selecting the at least one section;

(C) determining at least one annotation to be applied to the at least one section, including at least one of: (i) selecting at least one pre-defined notation; (ii) receiving input text; (ii) selecting at least one user-defined attribute; (iv) receiving a reference to a URL; and (v) receiving a reference to a file;

(D) associating the at least one annotation with the at least one section; and

(E) storing the at least one annotation for later retrieval, wherein the annotation is stored separately from the at least one document.

49. The method of claim 48, further comprising maintaining a separate version for the at least one annotation and the at least one document.

50. A computer-implemented system for managing an annotated electronic document in XML format, said system comprising:

(A) at least one merge component, to associate document data representative of at least one document, and annotation data representative of at least one annotation, to be applied to the at least one document, said document data having an XML format and including at least one element corresponding to a location of the at least one annotation within said document; and to provide at least one marked-up representation of the at least

one document, the at least one marked-up representation having the document data and the annotation data associated therewith; and

(B) at least one split component, responsive to said at least one marked-up representation, to extract the annotation data and the document data from the at least one marked-up representation;

(C) wherein the at least one annotation and the at least one document are at least one of stored logically separate and stored physically separate.

51. The system of claim 50, further comprising at least one version component, to at least one of (i) manage a history of changes and (ii) maintain at least a separate version for at least one of the document data and the annotation data applied thereto.

52. The system of claim 50, wherein the at least one annotation includes at least one of: a pre-defined notation, a user-provided text, a user-defined attribute, a reference to a URL, and a reference to an other file.

53. The system of claim 50, wherein the at least one document is representative of at least one of: a patent document, a trademark document, a copyright document, a product description document, a license document, a sui generis protection document, a design registration document, a trade secret document, and an opinion document.